

23. FOOD OF THE COMMON SKINK *MABUYA CARINATA*  
(SCHNEIDER)

On 22nd October 1986, while watching the activities of the common house swift behind the Baroda museum at 10.00 A.M. I saw a large specimen of the Common Skink (*Mabuya carinata*) moving around a small bush, about five feet from me. I think that the skink was searching for insects. A juvenile Garden Lizard (*Calotes versicolor*) was basking on a branch about 30 cm from the ground on the

same bush. The skink and the calotes, saw each other. Suddenly the skink tried to climb on to the branch of the bush, on which the calotes was seated. The frightened calotes jumped on a lower branch, and both calotes and skink fell to the ground. In a second the skink caught the calotes by the neck, and pulled it under the bush and swallowed the whole calotes in a few minutes.

ZOO INSPECTOR,  
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April 15, 1987.

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24. KILLING OF THE YELLOW MONITOR, *VARANUS FLAVESCENS* (GRAY 1827) (SQUAMATA: SAURIA) IN SOME VILLAGES OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

(With a photograph)

The Yellow Monitor or the Yellow-headed Monitor [*Varanus flavescens* (Gray 1827)], though it had quite an extensive former range, is now found only in the Indo-Gangetic plains, south of the Himalayas from Pakistan, east to Brahmaputra river, south to Kutch (Gujarat) in the west and northeastern Orissa in the east (Auffenberg 1986). This species, though apparently common in many places, is but poorly represented in museums (Smith 1935). The Yellow Monitor is generally met with along the marshy borders of small water bodies such as jheels, shallow lakes, etc. Unfortunately, the most favoured habitat of the Yellow Monitor has been drastically modified during the last several decades through agriculture, specially the paddy culture in the southern Gangetic plain. This singular factor appears to be the most important one for

causing major depletion in the population of the Yellow Monitor in most parts of its range. Mass killing for hide hunting might also be the other contributing factor towards this (Tikader 1983). For its conservation, this species has been included in Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended up to 1980. Further, it has been included in the Appendix I of CITES. By these, the Yellow Monitor — live or dead or part thereof is totally protected throughout the country and any trade on it is totally banned. The purpose of the present note is to record the mass killing of the Yellow Monitor in spite of legal restraints.

During an excursion on 23rd October, 1986, we were moving through a small patch of grass jungle in Gonpur village, about 20 km. SW of Rampurhat, Birbhum district,